

# **The Somali Health Research in Somalia: The Case of Somali-Swedish Health Research Collaboration Achievements, Challenges and Future plans”**

By

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# **WELL RECEIVED AND PROMISING RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP: THE ACHIEVEMENTS**

1. The revival of health research in a practical manner through the joint Somali and Swedish research collaboration for health is an achievement in its own right.
2. This partnership has mobilized the Somali universities enabling their active participation reflected in programme co-ownership and some cost-sharing
3. The programme has triggered an institutional research capacity building in all the 6 Somali universities and elicited a number of policy decisions and operational strategies to strengthen research in these institutions

# **WELL RECEIVED AND PROMISING RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP: THE ACHIEVEMENTS**

4. Research vision and mission has now become a reality in our academic institutions
5. Universities are working with their respective public health authorities for streamlining the research priorities and translating research results into policy and action
6. Efforts have been initiated to strengthen Somali inter-university coordination and cooperation and this has positively influenced the wider partnership of the Somali Research and Education Network (SomaliREN)
7. Encouraged the forging of research partnerships with key health players such as UNICEF, DFID and others



- Established as a trust in 2009 with 18 Somali higher education member institutions
- A member of UbuntuNet Alliance and ASREN
- the NREN is operational – serving the members
  - Sought and facilitated graduate scholarships for the members
  - Facilitated the procurement of digital libraries
  - Setup e-repository platforms for internal use
  - Assisted with the build-out of the campus networks
  - Capacity building related to campus network design and implementation
- Strategic Pillars: Connectivity, Community, Content

# OUR RESEARCH PRIORITIES

- ❖ Sexual and reproductive health services including child spacing
- ❖ Maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health
- ❖ Communicable diseases such as Tuberculosis, Malaria, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis viral infections
- ❖ strengthening the six core building blocks of the health system with focus on health workforce, leadership and governance
- ❖ Promote safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene
- ❖ Combat mental health disorders and substance abuse
- ❖ Control non-communicable disease and avert premature deaths

# HEALTH RESEARCH CHALLENGES THAT WE SHOULD OVERCOME

- Low Research and Publication capacity
- Laboratory Equipment Challenges in Medical Schools
- Weak teaching Hospitals and paucity of Demographic Health Surveillance field sites for research and education
- Poorly equipped libraries and reading spaces coupled with lack of access to fast and powerful e-resources and internet facilities
- Governance and leadership challenges in the Somali higher education that impinge on academics and on research development
- Financing challenges arising from over dependence on student fees, and little or no budget allocated to research
- Faculty development and career advancement not closely linked to research performance

# **COMMITTED TO ADVANCE HEALTH RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE WAY FORWARD**

## **I. Within the Somali Universities Framework**

- Develop a cohesive inter-university health research strategy with defined priorities, ethical guidelines, earmarked funds, building research capacity and research enabling environments yielding better access to information and linking with public health authorities for evidence based policies and action
- Closely partner with the National Institute for Health (NIH) to implement, monitor and evaluate quality standards and develop policies for Health research in line with the SDGs
- Establish inter-university research collaboration and involve the health authorities to contribute to the recovery of the health system and strengthen its resilience
- Establish university institutional frameworks for scaling up the building of international research collaboration

## II. TO THE SWEDISH UNIVERSITIES

- Somali universities extend their gratitude and acknowledgement to the Swedish universities for their support to this research collaboration
- We also salute the Swedish government for investing tangible resources on a large-scale humanitarian and development interventions in Somalia
- We need to sustain this partnership to generate research that can contribute to the transformation of the national health system in the eve of the agenda set for SDGs
- We request the Swedish Universities to sustain this partnership and prepare for a long-term research cooperation reiterating the successful legacy of research capacity development of the past
- Help in generating applicable research knowledge for rebuilding the Somali fragile health system



### III. TO WHO ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH POLICY AND SYSTEMS RESEARCH

- Somali universities strongly welcome the AHPSR to join us at this juncture, when we are confidently moving forward, have made some tangible progress and mobilized a high level of commitment
- We appeal for the Alliance to join our health system strengthening and life-saving research where the technical solutions are adapted to the local context through evidence based policies and practice
- Help in catalysing the WHO Regional Office and other WHO technical programmes to support this important partnership with the prospect of generating lessons for effective health service provision in a highly fragile context
- Provide research grants for capacity building in close partnership with the Swedish participating universities

# CREATING A PLATFORM FOR DISSEMINATION AND UTILIZATION OF RESEARCH

- We believe time has come to seriously work on creating a Somali health journal, as our partnership will soon yield valuable research outputs that need a readily available platform for publication
- Somali Swedish Researchers' Association (SSRA) active support to this initiative is duly acknowledged
- The journal will be the dissemination forum of our research flagship projects
- It will bridge the contextual research knowledge to health system policy and practice



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY



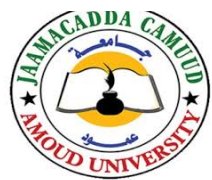
Karolinska Institutet



DALARNA UNIVERSITY



UPPSALA UNIVERSITET



**SSRA**

SOMALI-SWEDISH RESEARCHERS' ASSOCIATION

**MAHADSANIDIN**

**THANK YOU**

**TACK**